

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 3, 4, 9-14, 19, and 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Winters (U.S. Patent No. 4,007,330), in view of Osuge, JP 2000-101549 (“Osuge”). Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Winters, in view of Osuge and Klang et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,330,271 (“Klang”). Applicant notes that the Examiner fails to specifically recite any rejection of claim 21, which depends from claim 19.

Applicant notes that the publication date of Osuge (April 7, 2000) is less than one year prior to the U.S. filing date of the present Application (July 6, 2000). Therefore, Osuge is only available as a prior art reference against the present invention under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a). Further, the priority date of the present Application (July 6, 1999) is earlier than the publication date of Osuge.

Therefore, without commenting on the substantive merits of the Examiner’s rejections, Applicant hereby traverses the prior art rejections of claims 1-3, 4, 9-14, 19, and 21-23 by perfecting the claim to foreign priority.

Applicant perfects the claim to priority by filing herewith a verified English translation of the priority document, JP 11-191287 (191287/1999) with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, thereby removing Osuge as a reference against the present Application. (Applicant notes that JP 11-191287 and JP 191287/1999 are two numbers for the same document identifying it by the Japanese year and the common year, respectively.)

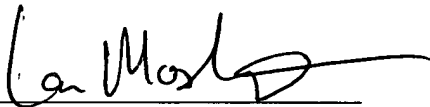
Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 1-3, 4, 9-14, 19, and 21-23 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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